

## SOAR Charter School Board Meeting

Date, Time and Place: February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 4800 Telluride St. BLDG 4, Denver, CO 80249

### Attendance of Board Members:

Present: Sue Sava, Rosann Ward, Shelli Brown, William Weintraub, Rona Wilensky, Laurie Godwin, Claudia Gutierrez, Ellin Keene

Present by phone: Ethan Hemming

Absent: Dan Smink

Staff absent: Brad Fischer

**Quorum? Yes**

Also in attendance: Marc Waxman, Sonia Sisneros, Lacey Martinez

Members of the public in attendance:

Meeting brought to order – Rosann moved, Bill seconds 8:45 AM

8:45-8:50 Public Comment

8:50-9:05 Consent Agenda

- Minutes
- Monthly dashboard
  - Rosann asked about the suspension in the dashboards. This was our first suspension of the year & was necessary due to the escalation of occurrences happening.
  - Mental Health Center of Denver has onsite services at the Evie Dennis Campus. Most of our students who really need this service are already taking advantage of it. Emily Garcia serves our SOAR students and cannot take any more cases as her work is already to its max due to another counselor quitting recently. Students who are recently identified as in need are encouraged to go through their health insurance provider.
  - There are unique situations happening in students' lives that are affecting their behavior at the school level.
- Monthly financials
  - Shelli notes that she will be on a DPS committee that will be making recommendations to the school board about the upcoming Bond and Mill Levy initiative for this November's ballot. Marc suggested that if Shelli would like to have a discussion around this topic, specifically how it can affect Soar/ charter schools, he is willing to meet.

- We did not include Mill Levy funds in the budget.
- Teaching increase included despite the cut in PPR

Motion to adopt consent agenda – Dan Moved, Rosann seconds 8:56 AM

9:05-9:45 Finance Committee

- Approve FY16 budget
  - We need to approve the revisions to the budget.
  - There's one issue Marc wants to make sure everyone is okay with. In the past we've paid out unused PTO for teachers at \$100 a day. When we took that away, there was an increase of PTO use due to losing the days & not being paid out for it. Marc told staff if we get money from DPS that is unexpected then we would revisit this policy & think about bringing it back. This would add \$25,000 to the budget - this would be a cap.

Motion to approve FY16 budget – Ellin moved, Bill seconds 9:00 AM

- FY17 budget update
  - FRL is steady & possibly increasing
  - We cut 3 teacher positions & we're hoping to bring at least 1 of those back. K/1 intervention is currently cut but we are trying to bring it back.
  - The special education needs are significant in the higher grades which is why we've cut the K/1 intervention position as opposed to upper grades.
  - Another issue with budget implications is the professional development & the trauma informed school work that are sort of connected. Our staff is going to get training so we can become a trauma informed school. We are working with Mount St Vincents on training and staff development.
  - We're still figuring out what do to with PD money next year. We are leaving this flexible & not locking anyone in at this point because the budget is less than what we usually have.
  - Ethan & Marc prepared a financial visions workshop (brainstorming possibilities) and specifics around reserves will not be discussed - only hypotheticals. DPS has not gotten back to us around reserves yet. We're still meeting the threshold of what DPS expects.
  - FY16 we have about \$40,000 not allocated anywhere. FY17 budget does not assume any rollover. If we don't use it this year, it will rollover into FY17.
- Financial visioning
  - Ethan & Marc got together to figure out what's fundamental to Soar that could have significant fiscal implications.
  - Things that would have big implications on the budget:
    - Annual calendar
    - Staff compensation
      - Theory of compensation
      - Salaries
      - Benefits

- Reserves
  - Class size
  - Facility improvements
  - ECE
  - Professional development
  - Staffing structure
  - Replication/growth
    - Increased neighborhood housing
    - Find criteria necessary to move forward (outside criteria as well)
    - Middle school
  - Takeover/turnover
  - Teacher prep
  - Partnerships
  - Middle school preparation
- How can the board help with this visioning moving forward?
    - Next steps include prioritizing the identified list and figuring out what the board wants to look at in more detail?

#### 9:45-10:45 Director's Report

- Interim assessment data
  - Jess did a good job of providing notes around this.
  - We are going to look into how our students are doing that have moved onto middle school.
  - We are going to see if there's a way to look at a student's data that have been at SOAR from kindergarten.
  - K/1 seems strong – how can we prescribe these strengths going into classroom based PD.
  - Gianna is leaving as a consultant because she got a full time job. Who is taking her work over next year?
- Guiding Principles metrics update
  - Marc will get back to us around the mid-year reflection on systems thinking.
- Stress and sustainability for teachers
  - Marc met with teachers after talking with Jess & Sonia and started working towards fixes for the staff identified stress issues.
  - Marc does a survey midyear to see what's working & not working.
- Trauma-informed school model
  - Mount Saint Vincent is going to take the lead around getting our staff on board with being a trauma informed school. There have been a few meetings with them in the recent past which has resulted in Sonia and other Soar school leaders getting trained in this model with the plan to training more throughout this school year. We are going to build this into the summer PD. Two staff trainings have already been scheduled.
  - Additional support would include an onsite mental health support.
  - Shelli noted that she met with a caseworker from DHS recently. They are doing community based mental health first aid trainings in the Denver neighborhoods

with the highest amount of calls to the DHS hotline. 80239 & 80249 zip codes are among a few others on the list.

- Rosann notes that some board members should be involved in these trainings (trauma informed or mental health first aide). Marc is going to send the dates for the trauma informed trainings during PD days. Shelli will connect the DHS caseworker to Sonia and Marc for further conversation about next steps regarding mental health first aide.
- The board agrees that they would like to move forward with the trauma informed work.
- Monthly updates
- SEL work
  - The existing work is Responsive Classroom
  - The work that Gianna did is creating & building awareness around these things. They go so hand in hand and it's really a level of sophistication.
  - RC does not significantly include anything around trauma.
- Survey
  - The questions for the upcoming staff survey were passed out to the board for final input and revision before Rona finalized them and sent them to Barb for disbursement.

Motion to approve a \$500 contract for Barb Egan – Bill moved, Rosann seconds 10:47 AM

Motion to adjourn Shelli moved, Bill seconds 10:48 AM

10:45-11:30 Search Committee update - Personnel (Executive Session)